

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, as was their decision to block broadcast of the reading of the names of the fallen war heroes in Iraq.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. There has always been a danger that large companies controlling the airwaves would be able to one-sidedly sway public opinion to their own political and financial needs. This fear is becoming reality as large conglomerates of media outlets like Sinclair have begun to blatantly push the envelope by not only presenting, but promoting, one-sided and biased political commentary and so called "news".

Under current law, Sinclair has a right to hold and express political views, even to endorse candidates if they so choose. But what Sinclair is actually doing is using the immense power of the media, the people's airwaves, to campaign for a political candidate in a Presidential election in a manner that violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the law.

This blatant, anti-American behavior must be stopped. Our very Democracy depends on it. It is important that media outlets provide equal time to views from all sides of political arguments, and more substantive and factual news and information from our own local communities.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process, especially in this case, needs to involve more than a returned postcard. And Sinclair's conduct in this Presidential race should be thoroughly and publicly investigated by the FCC, with an eye toward corrective action and punishment if warranted.

Thank you.